THE TRAVANCORE SRI MULAM ASSEMBLY.

(*OFFICIAL REPORT*).

THIRD ASSEMBLY.

SECOND SESSION—1945/1120.

Wednesday, the 21st February, 1945/10th Kumbhom 1120.

The Assembly met again at 12 of the clock on the 21st February 1945/10th Kumbhom 1120 in the Legislative Chamber of the Public Offices with Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore, in the Chair.

NEW MEMBERS.

1. Dr. S. John (*Surgeon General*).
2. Mr. G. Narayanan Tampi (*Secretary to Government*).
3. Mr. N. Ramamurthi (*Superintendent of Road Transport*).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Men engaged on active war service.

78 * **MR. S. MUTHUKARUPPA PILLAI** (*Thovala cum Agastiswaram*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether they are aware that a large number of young men from our State are engaged on active war service both in India and overseas;

(*b*) is there any scheme contemplated by the Government of Travancore to find them suitable employment when they return from war service; and

(*c*) if not, will the Government be pleased to consider the desirability of chalking out some scheme for the purpose without delay?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) This does not arise.

MR. S. MUTHUKARUPPA PILLAI: Will the Government be pleased to say whether they include in their scheme those Travancoreans who were recruited direct from British India?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: Yes Sir. There is no distinction drawn between Travancoreans recruited directly from Travancore and those recruited through agencies outside Travancore.

PRESIDENT: Order, order. This question illustrates one aspect of the ruling that I gave yesterday. It is necessary, I think, and expedient at this stage to give an answer with reference to the programme of the Government in regard to Travancoreans who have been

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[President.]

recruited to the Armed Forces of the Crown whether from Travancore directly or from British India. This scheme will also include those recruited to the Assam Labour Contingent and to the other labour forces which have been recruited either with or without the concurrence of this Government. The idea of Government is, as an essential part of Post-War Reconstruction, to utilise as far as may be possible the services of every person who has rendered service to the world by joining in this war whether as a part of the combatant personnel or of the labour personnel which is as important as the combatant personnel. To enforce that policy Government have two or three schemes in view.

One of those schemes relates to the general communications and roads programme. It will be remembered that the labour forces in Assam have been utilised for the purpose of clearing virgin forests, of laying roads, building bridges and culverts and doing exactly those things which, in the post-war period, will be most conducive to the progress of the roads programme of this State. Government are not only willing but most anxious to enlist the services of those people who have thus served in directions which will be useful to the State.

It has been stated on the floor of the House during the budget debate and thereafter, that Government have, in their hands or expect to have in their hands, a sum not less than 7 or 8 crores of rupees for post-war reconstruction generally. Government are also prepared and willing to take such further measures whether by loan or otherwise, so as to raise from available sources an amount which may come near 20 crores of rupees. Those 20 crores of rupees will be used for post-war reconstruction. No small proportion of the 20 crores of rupees, *i. e.*, 2 or 3 crores will be devoted to improve the roads, the trunk roads, feeder roads and village roads.

It is the deliberate policy of this Government which has been announced to the Government of India that they will co-ordinate their activities with the Government of India in regard to the All India Trunk Road Programme. Two trunk roads are contemplated by the Government of India, one going from north to south from Peshawar to Cape Comorin and the other from Karachi to Calcutta. Having that programme in view, Government have stated that they would be willing to co-operate with the Government of India to cement concrete the road from north to south, as their contribution to the All India Programme. What subsidy or grant or assistance the Government of India will give, will depend on negotiations. But apart from what the Government of India are doing, if they choose the coastal road, we shall choose another road also from north to south for the purpose of cement concreting so that in the State there will be two cement concreted roads exactly on the same pattern as the Trivandrum-Nagercoil road, stretching from one end of the State to the other. Work on that road will commence as soon as the Cement Factory is established here. Government have entered into an agreement with the All India

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Cement Factory, which is practically the monopolists of cement throughout India, that they should start a factory in the State, utilising the limestone deposits of the various inland waters of the State. That agreement having been entered into, we are now getting cement at special rates by way of another supplemental agreement between this Government and the cement organisation of India. Our idea is that the Cement Factory will come into existence as soon as the war is over in which the Cement Company and the Government will be joint partners and cement will be produced in sufficient quantities for the road programme of the State and the cement concreting of the roads of the State. That will be done as a special business.

But apart from that, there are these feeder roads and the village roads. Government are determined having regard to local public opinion, which, in their opinion, is quite justified, that a programme, an intensive programme of the improvement of the village roads is essential for the agricultural and industrial improvement of the State. It is hoped that every one of the persons who have been recruited to Assam Labour Forces will be utilised for that purpose. They will be invited to form themselves into co-operative organisations so that near their own places of living, near their own habitations, they may take up that stretch of road nearest to their homes. These persons after their return from their labours, will form themselves into separate co-operative organisations in which some of the well-to-do members of the public will, I take it, join, so that they may finance the undertaking in the beginning. They will be co-operative organisations, each taking up one mile, two miles or three miles of feeder and village roads. Certain co-operative societies will be financed by Government. In other words, Government wishes to use the P. W. D. hereafter mainly as a supervisory and not as an executive organisation. They will see to the standard, the maintenance of the standards in regard to these village roads and feeder roads. But these co-operative organisations will be invited and taking advantage of the Engineering talents, taking advantage of the financial resources and the experience of these labourers, they will be utilised for the purpose of silt clearance and minor irrigation works throughout the State. That is one of the aspects of post-war reconstruction in so far as it relates to those persons who are doing labourers' work. So far as other military personnel are concerned, all the trained technical personnel will be absorbed in one or other of the industries which will be started in this State. So far as others are concerned, each one of them or groups of them will come into line with one or other items of the Government's post-war programme. Government are confidently expecting that these people who have risked their lives at a critical juncture of the world's history will be given employment and given wages commensurate with their needs and the importance of the duties which they have done.

MR. K. A. MATHEW (*Thiruvella*): In view to the statement made by the President where it is stated that technically trained men will be absorbed in industries, may I know what is the proposal in regard to non-Travau-coreans in such companies? Will they be asked to go?

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PRESIDENT: All non-Travancoreans taken into service of the industrial concerns at present, in so far as they are essential for those industries will be encouraged to continue until they have trained another set of people to take their place. Every non-Travancorean will be entertained only on a short term basis as is generally the case followed now.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: May I know if this is the policy followed in regard to the Fertiliser's Company in Alwaye.

PRESIDENT: Yes, certainly.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: The short-term contract?

PRESIDENT: The company will take them on short term contracts. Government have 51 per cent of the shares of the company. Such being the case in so far as Government can exercise an influence over the company, every one who is taken in that company who is not a Travancorean will be taken mainly on a short term contract doing the work for which he is specially fitted.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: In view of the statement by the Chief Secretary the other day which seems to be contradictory to the Dewan's statement.....

PRESIDENT: Not at all. At the present moment they are doing work which the people of the State have not been accustomed to do. I shall give one instance. Within the course of seven or eight months they have done work on the site of the Fertilisers which cannot ordinarily be done, without American initiative and push in 5 years. I can bear testimony to that, although it is somewhat humiliating to admit it. They have cleared the ground and started work. Working at high pressure, all the 24 hours of the day, paying high wages they have made it clear that by the time the plant which is being ordered in America comes here the building will be ready for its reception. Government do not propose to interfere with such intensive work whether it is done by Travancoreans or non-Travancoreans. Speed expedition is of the essence of the matter. Complete discretion has been given and will be given to them in these initial stages so that utilising all the finances and energies that are available they may start to make the inception of the scheme possible. Even then it has been emphasised more than once that the staff as far as possible should be Travancoreans. And quite recently Government have addressed more than one letter in regard to the wages. They have been told that they must not pay such wages as will attract to them people from other well-established industries. I have definitely taken the line that whilst they are entitled to give high wages because they must get skilled work done immediately, they must not deflect labour from other established industries. Such a communication has been addressed to them and I know that they are taking advantage of that and proceeding on that basis. It has also been emphasised that where people are available for taking up a work, let us say the engineering supervision, they must employ Travancoreans. I am glad to say—although I do not wish to give names—that they have accepted that advice which will be made

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known in the course of a few days. Generally speaking, it may be taken that the object of this Government is to start industries as quickly and as efficaciously as possible. Nothing will stand in their way. Whether money is forthcoming or not, trained personnel has to be got from England or America as the case may be and they will be accordingly secured. But the idea of this Government at the same time is to make all these industries Travancore industries in the long run.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI (*Mavelikara* cum *Kunnattur*) : Are we to take from the statement of the President that Government have advised the company to give their employees a low salary when compared with the pay obtainable elsewhere?

PRESIDENT : Certainly. We have definitely said so. For instance, when the Tatas started their work in India, they secured the services of Mr. Peterson for whom they paid a monthly salary of Rs. 37,500 for a kind of general supervision. At that time the founder Tata was alive and he said that adequate salary should be paid for skilled people. If a man will devote one hour of his day to the work and if I find he is a first rate man, I am perfectly willing to proceed on that plan. My own view exactly squares with them. But another thing has to be said. If as a result of their intensive work they go on offering fancy wages, it will be impossible for other industries, agricultural or otherwise, to get on in the State. If that happens, many persons will be on their waiting list and even if they do not get work for a few days they will be able to get five to six times the wages for their working days and that very easily. To avoid such a state of affairs happening in the Fertilisers, I have put a stipulation both as to the maximum number of persons to be employed and the wages to be given by them.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: May I know whether this is the justification for taking a non-Travancore Indian?

PRESIDENT : It does not matter whether a non-Travancore Indian or European is taken. If a man has to be paid high wages for a special kind of work and if a fully equipped man becomes available, he will certainly be employed on any wage that can be afforded by Government, but on this condition that he is here not on a permanent lien but to train people to take his place and to leave as courteously and speedily as possible.

Paddy purchased by Government during 1119.

79. * **MR. S. MUTHUKARUPPA PILLAI** : Will the Government be pleased :

(*a*) to give a taluk-war statement of the amount of local paddy purchased by Government during the year 1119 ;

(*b*) to state the number of ration units purchased by private individuals, families and bodies in Nanjinad, *i. e.*, in the taluks of Thovala, and Agastiswaram in the year 1119 ; and

(*c*) to state the names of the two taluks in the State in which the largest and the smallest number of ration units have been purchased by private individuals, families and bodies in the year 1119 and

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